EUTHYDEMUS

Socrates meets his good friend Crito, recounts and discusses with him a public encounter he had the previous day with a pair of sophists, and urges him to join him in enrolling—old men though they are!—as the sophists' pupils. That is a bare summary of this exquisitely accomplished dialogue. Euthydemus and his older brother Dionysodorus (real people, though hardly known except here) have been in Athens previously. But now they have abandoned their former teaching of lawyer's oratory and military science for instruction in a different sort of combat: the combat of words in question-and-answer discussion of the basic type to which Socrates himself is devoted, and of which we get especially well defined instances in Protagoras. *They promise to 'refute whatever may be said, no matter whether it is true or false'; by teaching the same 'eristic' wisdom to their pupils (it doesn't take long, they say), they will make them paragons of human virtue. Socrates forestalls the formal sophistic 'exhibition' of their skill that they have brought with them (as he similarly avoids or silently endures Gorgias' and Hippias' exhibitions in the dialogues named after them), and gets them instead to converse with the young boy Clinias, to persuade him to devote himself to 'philosophy and the practice of virtue'—under their tutelage, it goes without saying. Though it is not their prepared exhibition, their questioning of Clinias (and, later on, Ctesippus and Socrates himself) does give a clear demonstration of their methods. Thus readers, together with Crito, can form their own opinion of the value of this new brand of the sophist's art, so different from that of Protagoras, or Prodicus, or Hippias. Socrates twice interposes extended question-and-answer conversations of his own with Clinias, offering a very different picture of how one might draw a young boy on to devote himself to philosophy and the practice of virtue.*

Crito is not nearly so enthusiastic as Socrates himself claims to be about these new sophists' 'wisdom', and hesitates to accept his invitation to join him in enrolling as their students. As emerges at the very end of the dialogue, he had got an earlier report on yesterday's proceedings from an unnamed acquaintance, which was much less laudatory than Socrates'. Plato makes it plain to his contemporary readers that this person is the orator and teacher of 'philosophy' Isocrates, head of a very successful school at Athens in the decades after Socrates' death, rival to Plato's own Academy. (Plato has Socrates compliment him by name in carefully qualified ways toward the end of Phaedrus.*) Accepting Crito's description of the sophists' activities as 'philosophy', this person denounces it as 'of no value whatsoever', as 'worthless' and 'ridiculous'. Do Socrates, and Plato, agree? It seems not—that at least is the implication of*

Socrates' praise, no doubt ironically overdrawn, and of his refusal to join in the denunciation. True philosophy, and real devotion to it, require an interest in logic and argument for its own sake, whether or not it is used correctly or yields valid support for true conclusions. Even the misuse of reason has its gripping appeal to one who would model his life on the proper use of it. Socrates is himself no 'eristic'—his approach to Clinias is fostering, not refutatory, and his firm interest throughout is in the truth, not mere verbal victory. But he (or Plato) refuses to reject, dismiss, and denounce the arguments of the eristics, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, as 'of no value whatsoever', as 'worthless' and 'ridiculous'. They have their own power, as all uses of reason do, and must be respectfully examined and analyzed—even while one does not accept their conclusions.

J.M.C.

CRITO: Who was it, Socrates, you were talking to in the Lyceum yesterday? There was such a crowd standing around you that when I came up and wanted to listen, I couldn't hear anything distinctly. But by craning my neck I did get a look, and I thought it was some stranger you were talking to. Who was it? 271

SOCRATES: Which one are you asking about, Crito? There was not just one, but two.

CRITO: The person I mean was sitting next but one to you on your right—between you was Axiochus' young son.[1] He seemed to me, Socrates, to have grown tremendously, and to be almost of a size with our Critobulus. But Critobulus is thin, whereas this boy has come on splendidly and is extremely good-looking. b

SOCRATES: Euthydemus is the man you mean, Crito, and the one sitting next to me on my left was his brother, Dionysodorus—he, too, takes part in the discussions.

CRITO: I don't know either of them, Socrates. They are another new kind of sophist, I suppose. Where do they come from, and what is their particular wisdom? c

SOCRATES: By birth, I think, they are from this side, from Chios. They went out as colonists to Thurii but were exiled from there and have already spent a good many years in this region. As to your question about the wisdom of the pair, it is marvelous, Crito! The two are absolutely omniscient, so much so that I never knew before what pancratiasts really were. They are both absolutely all-round fighters, not like the two battling brothers from Acarnania who could only fight with their bodies.[2] These two d

Translated by Rosamond Kent Sprague.

1. Clinias: see below, 273a–b.

2. The pancration (lit., "all-round fighting") was a combination of wrestling and boxing.

are first of all completely skilled in body, being highly adept at fighting
272 in armor and able to teach this skill to anyone else who pays them a fee; and then they are the ones best able to fight the battle of the law court and to teach other people both how to deliver and how to compose the sort of speeches suitable for the courts. Previously these were their only skills, but now they have put the finishing touch to pancratistic art. They have now mastered the one form of fighting they had previously left untried; as a result, not a single man can stand up to them, they have
b become so skilled in fighting in arguments and in refuting whatever may be said, no matter whether it is true or false. So that I, Crito, have a mind to hand myself over to these men, since they say that they can make any other person clever at the same things in a short time.

CRITO: What's that, Socrates? Aren't you afraid that, at your age, you are already too old?

SOCRATES: Far from it, Crito—I have enough example and encouragement to keep me from being afraid. The two men themselves were pretty well advanced in years when they made a start on this wisdom I want to get; I mean the eristic sort. Last year or the year before they were not yet wise.
c My only anxiety is that I may disgrace the two strangers just as I have already disgraced Connus the harpist, Metrobius' son, who is still trying to teach me to play. The boys who take lessons with me laugh at the sight and call Connus the "Old Man's Master." So I am afraid that someone may reproach the strangers on the same score; perhaps they may be unwilling to take me as a pupil for fear that this should happen. So, Crito, I have persuaded some other old men to go along with me as fellow pupils to
d the harp lessons, and I shall attempt to persuade some others for this project. Why don't you come along yourself? We will take your sons as bait to catch them—I feel sure that their desire to get the boys will make them give us lessons too.

CRITO: I have no objection, Socrates, if you really think well of the plan. But first explain to me what the wisdom of the two men is, to give me some idea of what we are going to learn.

SOCRATES: You shall hear at once, since I can't pretend that I paid no attention to the pair. As a matter of fact, I did just that and remember
e what was said and will try to recount the whole thing from the beginning. As good luck would have it, I was sitting by myself in the undressing-room just where you saw me and was already thinking of leaving. But when I got up, my customary divine sign put in an appearance. So I
273 sat down again, and in a moment the two of them, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, came in, and some others with them, disciples of theirs, who seemed to me pretty numerous. When the pair came in, they walked around the cloister, and they had not yet made more than two or three turns when in came Clinias, who, as you rightly say, has grown a lot. Following him were a good many others, lovers of his, and among them Ctesippus, a young man from Paeania—he's a well-bred fellow except for
b a certain youthful brashness. From the doorway Clinias caught sight of

me sitting alone and came straight up and sat down on my right, just as you describe it. When Dionysodorus and Euthydemus saw him, at first they stood talking to each other and glancing at us every so often (I was keeping a good eye on them) but after a while they came over and one of them, Euthydemus, sat down next to the boy, and his brother next to me on my left, and the rest found places where they could. Since I hadn't c
seen the two for quite a time, I gave them a good welcome, and then I said to Clinias, You know, Clinias, that the wisdom of these two men, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, has to do with important matters and not mere trivia. They know all about war, that is, the things a man ought to know who means to be a good general, such as the formations of troops and their command and how to fight in armor; and besides this, they can make a man capable of looking out for himself in court if anyone should do him an injury.

They obviously thought little of me for saying this, because they both d
laughed and glanced at each other, and Euthydemus said, We are not any longer in earnest about these things, Socrates—we treat them as diversions.

I was astonished and said, Your serious occupation must certainly be splendid if you have important things like these for your diversions! For heaven's sake, tell me what this splendid occupation is!

Virtue, Socrates, is what it is, he said, and we think we can teach it better than anyone else and more quickly.

Good heavens, I said, what a claim you make! Wherever did you find e
this godsend? I was still thinking of you, as I just said, as men particularly skilled in fighting in armor, and so I spoke of you in this way. When you visited us before, I remember that this was what you claimed to be. But now if you really have this other wisdom, be propitious—you see, I am addressing you exactly as though you were gods because I want you to forgive me for what I said earlier. But make sure, Euthydemus and 274
Dionysodorus, that you are telling the truth—the magnitude of your claim certainly gives me some cause for disbelief.

Rest assured, Socrates, that things are as we say.

Then I count you much happier in your possession of this wisdom than the Great King in that of his empire! But tell me just this: do you plan to give a demonstration of this wisdom, or what do you mean to do?

We are here for that very purpose, Socrates: to give a demonstration, b
and to teach, if anyone wants to learn.

I give you my word that everyone who does not have this wisdom will wish to have it: first myself, then Clinias here, and, in addition to us, this fellow Ctesippus and these others, I said, pointing to the lovers of Clinias who were already grouped around us. This had come about because Ctesippus had taken a seat a long way from Clinias, and when Euthydemus leaned forward in talking to me, he apparently obscured Ctesippus' view c
of Clinias, who was sitting between us. So Ctesippus, who wanted to look at his darling, as well as being interested in the discussion, sprang up first and stationed himself right in front of us. When the others saw him doing

this, they gathered around too, not only Clinias' lovers but the followers
d of Euthydemus and Dionysodorus as well. These were the ones I pointed to when I told Euthydemus that everyone was ready to learn. Then Ctesippus agreed very eagerly and so did all the rest, and all together they besought the pair to demonstrate the power of their wisdom.

So I said, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, do your absolute best to gratify these people and give a demonstration—and do it for my sake too. To give a complete one would obviously be a lengthy business; but tell
e me just this: are you able to make only that man good who is already persuaded that he ought to take lessons from you, or can you also make the man good who is not yet persuaded on this point, either because he believes that this thing, virtue, cannot be taught at all, or because he thinks that you two are not its teachers? Come tell me, does the task of persuading a man in this frame of mind both that virtue can be taught, and that you are the ones from whom he could learn it best, belong to this same art or to some other one?

It belongs to this same art, Socrates, said Dionysodorus.

275 Then, Dionysodorus, I said, you and your brother are the men of the present day best able to exhort a man to philosophy and the practice of virtue?

This is exactly what we think, Socrates.

Then put off the rest of your display to another time and give us a demonstration of this one thing: persuade this young man here that he ought to love wisdom and have a care for virtue, and you will oblige both me and all the present company. The boy's situation is this: both I and all these people want him to become as good as possible. He is the son of
b Axiochus (son of the old Alcibiades) and is cousin to the present Alcibiades—his name is Clinias. He is young, and we are anxious about him, as one naturally is about a boy of his age, for fear that somebody might get in ahead of us and turn his mind to some other interest and ruin him. So you two have arrived at the best possible moment. If you have no objection, make trial of the boy and converse with him in our presence.

When I had spoken, in almost these exact words, Euthydemus answered,
c with a mixture of bravery and confidence. It makes no difference to us, Socrates, so long as the young man is willing to answer.

As a matter of fact, he is quite used to that, I said, since these people here are always coming to ask him all sorts of questions and to converse with him. So he is pretty brave at answering.

As to what happened next, Crito, how shall I give you an adequate description of it? It is no small task to be able to recall such wisdom in
d detail, it was so great. So I ought to begin my account as the poets do, by invoking the Muses and Memory. Well, Euthydemus, as I remember, began something like this: Clinias, which are the men who learn, the wise or the ignorant?

Being confronted with this weighty question, the boy blushed and looked at me in doubt. And I, seeing that he was troubled, said, Cheer up, Clinias,

and choose bravely whichever seems to you to be the right answer—he may be doing you a very great service. e

Just at this moment Dionysodorus leaned a little toward me and, smiling all over his face, whispered in my ear and said, I may tell you beforehand, Socrates, that whichever way the boy answers he will be refuted.

While he was saying this, Clinias gave his answer, so that I had no chance to advise the boy to be careful; and he answered that the wise were the learners. 276

Then Euthydemus said, Are there some whom you call teachers, or not?

He agreed that there were.

And the teachers are teachers of those who learn, I suppose, in the same way that the music master and the writing master were teachers of you and the other boys when you were pupils?

He agreed.

And when you were learning, you did not yet know the things you were learning, did you?

No, he said.

And were you wise when you did not know these things? b

By no means, he said.

Then if not wise, ignorant?

Very much so.

Then in the process of learning what you did not know, you learned while you were ignorant?

The boy nodded.

Then it is the ignorant who learn, Clinias, and not the wise, as you suppose.

When he said this, the followers of Dionysodorus and Euthydemus broke into applause and laughter, just like a chorus at a sign from their director. And before the boy could well recover his breath, Dionysodorus took up the argument and said, Well then, Clinias, when the writing master gave you dictation, which of the boys learned the piece, the wise or the ignorant? c

The wise, said Clinias.

Then it is the wise who learn, and not the ignorant, and you gave Euthydemus a wrong answer just now.

Whereupon the supporters of the pair laughed and cheered very loudly indeed, in admiration of their cleverness. We, on the other hand, were panic-struck and kept quiet. Euthydemus, observing our distress, and in order to confound us further, would not let the boy go but went on questioning him and, like a skillful dancer, gave a double twist to his questions on the same point, saying, Do those who learn learn the things they know or the things they do not know? d

And Dionysodorus again whispered to me in a low voice, This is another, Socrates, just like the first. e

Mercy on us, I said, the first question certainly seemed good enough!

All our questions are of this same inescapable sort, Socrates, he said.

And this, no doubt, is the reason why your pupils admire you so much, I said.

Just then Clinias answered Euthydemus that the learners learned what they do not know, whereupon Euthydemus put him through the same course of questions as before.

277 What then, he said, don't you know your letters?

Yes, he said.

Then you know them all?

He agreed.

Whenever anyone dictates anything, doesn't he dictate letters?

He agreed.

b Then doesn't he dictate something you know, if you really know them all?

He agreed to this too.

Well then, he said, you are not the one who learns what someone dictates, are you, but the one who doesn't know his letters is the one who learns?

No, he said, I am the one who learns.

Then you learn what you know, he said, if you in fact do know all your letters.

He agreed.

Then your answer was wrong, he said.

Euthydemus had barely said this when Dionysodorus picked up the argument as though it were a ball and aimed it at the boy again, saying, Euthydemus is completely deceiving you, Clinias. Tell me, isn't learning the acquisition of the knowledge of what one learns?

Clinias agreed.

And what about knowing? he said. Is it anything except having knowledge already?

c He agreed.

Then not knowing is not yet having knowledge?

He agreed with him.

And are those who acquire something those who have it already or those who do not?

Those who do not.

And you have admitted, haven't you, that those who do not know belong to the group of those who do not have something?

He nodded.

Then the learners belong to those who acquire and not to those who have?

He agreed.

Then it is those who do not know who learn, Clinias, and not those who know.

d Euthydemus was hastening to throw the young man for the third fall when I, seeing that he was going down and wanting to give him a chance to breathe so that he should not turn coward and disgrace us, encouraged him, saying, Don't be surprised, Clinias, if these arguments seem strange

to you, since perhaps you don't take in what the visitors are doing with you. They are doing exactly what people do in the Corybantic mysteries when they enthrone a person they intend to initiate. If you have been initiated you know that there is dancing and sport on these occasions; and now these two are doing nothing except dancing around you and making e
sportive leaps with a view to initiating you presently. So you must now imagine yourself to be hearing the first part of the sophistic mysteries. In the first place, as Prodicus says, you must learn about the correct use of words; and our two visitors are pointing out this very thing, that you did not realize that people use the word "learn" not only in the situation in which a person who has no knowledge of a thing in the beginning acquires 278
it later, but also when he who has this knowledge already uses it to inspect the same thing, whether this is something spoken or something done. (As a matter of fact, people call the latter "understand" rather than "learn," but they do sometimes call it "learn" as well.) Now this, as they are pointing out, had escaped your notice—that the same word is applied to opposite sorts of men, to both the man who knows and the man who does not. There was something similar to this in the second question, when they asked you whether people learn what they know or what they do not b
know. These things are the frivolous part of study (which is why I also tell you that the men are jesting); and I call these things "frivolity" because even if a man were to learn many or even all such things, he would be none the wiser as to how matters stand but would only be able to make fun of people, tripping them up and overturning them by means of the distinctions in words, just like the people who pull the chair out from under a man who is going to sit down and then laugh gleefully when they see him sprawling on his back. So you must think of their performance c
as having been mere play. But after this they will doubtless show you serious things, if anyone will, and I shall give them a lead to make sure they hand over what they promised me. They said they would give a demonstration of hortatory skill, but now it seems to me that they must have thought it necessary to make fun of you before beginning. So, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, put an end to this joking; I think we have had d
enough of it. The next thing to do is to give an exhibition of persuading the young man that he ought to devote himself to wisdom and virtue. But first I shall give you two a demonstration of the way in which I conceive the undertaking and of the sort of thing I want to hear. And if I seem to you to be doing this in an unprofessional and ridiculous way, don't laugh at me—it is out of a desire to hear your wisdom that I have the audacity to improvise in front of you. Therefore, you and your disciples restrain e
yourselves and listen without laughing; and you, son of Axiochus, answer me:

Do all men wish to do well? Or is this question one of the ridiculous ones I was afraid of just now? I suppose it is stupid even to raise such a question, since there could hardly be a man who would not wish to do well.

No, there is no such person, said Clinias.

Well then, I said, the next question is, since we wish to do well, how are we to do so? Would it be through having many good things? Or is this question still more simple-minded than the other, since this must obviously be the case too?

He agreed.

279 Well then, what kinds of existing things are good for us? Or perhaps this isn't a difficult question and we don't need an important personage to supply the answer because everybody would tell us that to be rich is a good—isn't that so?

Very much so, he said.

b And so with being healthy, and handsome, and having a sufficient supply of the other things the body needs?

He agreed.

And, again, it is clear that noble birth, and power, and honor in one's country are goods.

He agreed.

Then which goods do we have left? I said. What about being self-controlled and just and brave? For heaven's sake tell me, Clinias, whether you think we will be putting these in the right place if we class them as goods or if we refuse to do so? Perhaps someone might quarrel with us on this point—how does it seem to you?

They are goods, said Clinias.

c Very well, said I. And where in the company shall we station wisdom? Among the goods, or what shall we do with it?

Among the goods.

Now be sure we do not leave out any goods worth mentioning.

I don't think we are leaving out any, said Clinias.

But I remembered one and said, Good heavens, Clinias, we are in danger of leaving out the greatest good of all!

Which one is that? He said.

Good fortune, Clinias, which everybody, even quite worthless people, says is the greatest of the goods.

You are right, he said.

d And I reconsidered a second time and said, son of Axiochus, you and I have nearly made ourselves ridiculous in front of our visitors.

How so? he said.

Because in putting good fortune in our previous list we are now saying the same thing all over again.

What do you mean?

Surely it is ridiculous, when a thing has already been brought up, to bring it up again and say the same things twice.

What do you mean by that?

Wisdom is surely good fortune, I said—this is something even a child would know.

He was amazed—he is still so young and simple-minded.

I noticed his surprise and said, You know, don't you, Clinias, that flute e
players have the best luck when it comes to success in flute music?

He agreed.

And the writing masters at reading and writing?

Certainly.

What about the perils of the sea—surely you don't think that, as a general rule, any pilots have better luck than the wise ones?

Certainly not.

And again, if you were on a campaign, with which general would you 280
prefer to share both the danger and the luck, a wise one or an ignorant one?

With a wise one.

And if you were sick, would you rather take a chance with a wise doctor or with an ignorant one?

With a wise one.

Then it is your opinion, I said, that it is luckier to do things in the company of wise men than ignorant ones?

He agreed.

So wisdom makes men fortunate in every case, since I don't suppose she would ever make any sort of mistake but must necessarily do right and be lucky—otherwise she would no longer be wisdom.

We finally agreed (I don't know quite how) that, in sum, the situation b
was this: if a man had wisdom, he had no need of any good fortune in addition. When we had settled this point, I went back and asked him how our former statements might be affected. We decided, I said, that if we had many good things, we should be happy and do well.

He agreed.

And would the possession of good things make us happy if they were c
of no advantage to us, or if they were of some?

If they were of some advantage, he said.

And would they be advantageous to us if we simply had them and did not use them? For instance, if we had a great deal of food but didn't eat any, or plenty to drink but didn't drink any, would we derive any advantage from these things?

Certainly not, he said.

Well then, if every workman had all the materials necessary for his particular job but never used them, would he do well by reason of possessing all the things a workman requires? For instance, if a carpenter were provided with all his tools and plenty of wood but never did any carpentry, could he be said to benefit from their possession? d

Not at all, he said.

Well then, if a man had money and all the good things we were mentioning just now but made no use of them, would he be happy as a result of having these good things?

Clearly not, Socrates.

So it seems, I said, that the man who means to be happy must not only have such goods but must use them too, or else there is no advantage in having them.

You are right.

e Then are these two things, the possession of good things and the use of them, enough to make a man happy, Clinias?

They seem so to me, at any rate.

If, I said, he uses them rightly, or if he does not?

If he uses them rightly.

Well spoken, I said. Now I suppose there is more harm done if someone uses a thing wrongly than if he lets it alone—in the first instance there is
281 evil, but in the second neither evil nor good. Or isn't this what we maintain?

He agreed that it was.

Then what comes next? In working and using wood there is surely nothing else that brings about right use except the knowledge of carpentry, is there?

Certainly not.

And, again, I suppose that in making utensils, it is knowledge that produces the right method.

He agreed.

And also, I said, with regard to using the goods we mentioned first—
b wealth and health and beauty—was it knowledge that ruled and directed our conduct in relation to the right use of all such things as these, or some other thing?

It was knowledge, he said.

Then knowledge seems to provide men not only with good fortune but also with well-doing, in every case of possession or action.

He agreed.

Then in heaven's name, I said, is there any advantage in other possessions without good sense and wisdom? Would a man with no sense profit more if he possessed and did much or if he possessed and did little?[3] Look at
c it this way: if he did less, would he not make fewer mistakes; and if he made fewer mistakes, would he not do less badly, and if he did less badly, would he not be less miserable?

Yes, indeed, he said.

And in which case would one do less, if one were poor or if one were rich?

Poor, he said.

And if one were weak or strong?

Weak.

If one were held in honor or in dishonor?

In dishonor.

And if one were brave and self-controlled would one do less, or if one were a coward?

A coward.

3. Omitting *noun echōn* at b8.

Then the same would be true if one were lazy rather than industrious?

He agreed.

And slow rather than quick, and dull of sight and hearing rather than d
keen?

We agreed with each other on all points of this sort.

So, to sum up, Clinias, I said, it seems likely that with respect to all the things we called good in the beginning, the correct account is not that in themselves they are good by nature, but rather as follows: if ignorance controls them, they are greater evils than their opposites, to the extent that they are more capable of complying with a bad master; but if good sense and wisdom are in control, they are greater goods. In themselves, however, e
neither sort is of any value.

It seems, he said, to be just as you say.

Then what is the result of our conversation? Isn't it that, of the other things, no one of them is either good or bad, but of these two, wisdom is good and ignorance bad?

He agreed.

Then let us consider what follows: since we all wish to be happy, and 282
since we appear to become so by using things and using them rightly, and since knowledge was the source of rightness and good fortune, it seems to be necessary that every man should prepare himself by every means to become as wise as possible—or isn't this the case?

Yes, it is, he said.

And for a man who thinks he ought to get this from his father much more than money, and not only from his father but also from his guardians b
and friends (especially those of his city and elsewhere who claim to be his lovers), and who begs and beseeches them to give him some wisdom, there is nothing shameful, Clinias, nor disgraceful if, for the sake of this, he should become the servant or the slave of a lover or of any man, being willing to perform any honorable service in his desire to become wise. Or don't you think so? I said.

You seem to me to be absolutely right, said he.

But only if wisdom can be taught, Clinias, I said, and does not come to c
men of its own accord. This point still remains for us to investigate and is not yet settled between you and me.

As far as I am concerned, Socrates, he said, I think it can be taught.

I was pleased and said, I like the way you talk, my fine fellow, and you have done me a good turn by relieving me of a long investigation of this very point, whether or not wisdom can be taught. Now then, since you believe both that it can be taught and that it is the only existing thing which makes a man happy and fortunate, surely you would agree that it d
is necessary to love wisdom and you mean to do this yourself.

This is just what I mean to do, Socrates, as well as ever I can.

When I heard this I was delighted and said, There, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, is my example of what I want a hortatory argument to be, though amateurish, perhaps, and expressed at length and with some

difficulty. Now let either of you who wishes give us a demonstration of the same thing in a professional manner. Or if you do not wish to do that,
e then start where I left off and show the boy what follows next: whether he ought to acquire every sort of knowledge, or whether there is one sort that he ought to get in order to be a happy man and a good one, and what it is. As I said in the beginning, it is of great importance to us that this young man should become wise and good.

283 This is what I said, Crito, and I paid particular attention to what should come next and watched to see just how they would pick up the argument and where they would start persuading the young man to practice wisdom and virtue. The elder of the two, Dionysodorus, took up the argument first and we all gazed at him in expectation of hearing some wonderful words immediately. And this is just what happened, since the man began
b an argument which was certainly wonderful, in a way, Crito, and worth your while to hear, since it was an incitement to virtue.

Tell me, Socrates, he said, and all you others who say you want this young man to become wise—are you saying this as a joke or do you want it truly and in earnest?

This gave me the idea that they must have thought we were joking earlier when we asked them to talk to the boy, and that this was why they
c made a joke of it and failed to take it seriously. When this idea occurred to me, I insisted all the more that we were in dead earnest.

And Dionysodorus said, Well, take care, Socrates, that you don't find yourself denying these words.

I have given thought to the matter, I said, and I shall never come to deny them.

Well then, he said, you say you want him to become wise?

Very much so.

And at the present moment, he said, is Clinias wise or not?

He says he is not yet, at least—he is a modest person, I said.

d But you people wish him to become wise, he said, and not to be ignorant?

We agreed.

Therefore, you wish him to become what he is not, and no longer to be what he is now?

When I heard this I was thrown into confusion, and he broke in upon me while I was in this state and said, Then since you wish him no longer to be what he is now, you apparently wish for nothing else but his death. Such friends and lovers must be worth a lot who desire above all things that their beloved should utterly perish!

e When Ctesippus heard this he became angry on his favorite's account and said, Thurian stranger, if it were not a rather rude remark, I would say "perish yourself" for taking it into your head to tell such a lie about me and the rest, which I think is a wicked thing to say—that I could wish this person to die!

Why Ctesippus, said Euthydemus, do you think it possible to tell lies?

Good heavens yes, he said, I should be raving if I didn't.

When one speaks the thing one is talking about, or when one does not speak it?

When one speaks it, he said. 284

So that if he speaks this thing, he speaks no other one of things that are except the very one he speaks?

Of course, said Ctesippus.

And the thing he speaks is one of those that are, distinct from the rest?

Certainly.

Then the person speaking that thing speaks what is, he said.

Yes.

But surely the person who speaks what is and things that are speaks the truth—so that Dionysodorus, if he speaks things that are, speaks the truth and tells no lies about you.

Yes, said Ctesippus, but a person who speaks these things, Euthydemus, b does not speak things that are.

And Euthydemus said, But the things that are not surely do not exist, do they?

No, they do not exist.

Then there is nowhere that the things that are not are?

Nowhere.

Then there is no possibility that any person whatsoever could do anything to the things that are not so as to make them be[4] when they are nowhere?

It seems unlikely to me, said Ctesippus.

Well then, when the orators speak to the people, do they do nothing?

No, they do something, he said.

Then if they do something, they also make something? c

Yes.

Speaking, then, is doing and making?

He agreed.

Then nobody speaks things that are not, since he would then be making something, and you have admitted that no one is capable of making something that is not. So according to your own statement, nobody tells lies; but if Dionysodorus really does speak, he speaks the truth and things that are.

Yes indeed, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, but he speaks things that are only in a certain way and not as really is the case.

What do you mean, Ctesippus? said Dionysodorus. Are there some d persons who speak of things as they are?

There certainly are, he said—gentlemen and those who speak the truth.

Now then, he said, are not good things well and bad things ill?

He agreed.

And you admit that gentlemen speak of things as they are?

Yes, I do.

4. Reading *hōste kai einai* at b6.

Then good men speak ill of bad things, Ctesippus, if they do in fact speak of them as they are.

They certainly do, he said—at any rate they speak ill of bad men. If you
e take my advice you will take care not to be one of them in case the good speak ill of *you*. For rest assured that the good speak ill of the bad.

And do they speak greatly of the great and hotly of the hot? asked Euthydemus.

Very much so, said Ctesippus, and what is more, they speak coldly of persons who argue in a frigid fashion.

You, Ctesippus, said Dionysodorus, are being abusive, very abusive indeed.

I am certainly doing no such thing, Dionysodorus, he said, since I like you, I am merely giving you a piece of friendly advice and endeavouring
285 to persuade you never to say, so rudely and to my face, that I want my most cherished friends to die.

Since they seemed to be getting pretty rough with each other, I started to joke with Ctesippus and said, Ctesippus, I think we ought to accept what the strangers tell us, if they are willing to be generous, and not to quarrel over a word. If they really know how to destroy men so as to make good and sensible people out of bad and stupid ones, and the two
b of them have either found out for themselves or learned from someone else a kind of ruin or destruction by which they do away with a bad man and render him good, if, as I say, they know how to do this—well, they clearly do, since they specifically claimed that the art they had recently discovered was that of making good men out of bad ones—then let us concede them the point and permit them to destroy the boy for us and make him wise—and do the same to the rest of us as well. And if you
c young men are afraid, let them "try it on the Carian,"[5] as they say, and I will be the victim. Being elderly, I am ready to run the risk, and I surrender myself to Dionysodorus here just as I might to Medea of Colchis.[6] Let him destroy me, or if he likes, boil me, or do whatever else he wants, but he must make me good.

And Ctesippus said, I too, Socrates, am ready to hand myself over to the visitors; and I give them permission to skin me even more thoroughly than they are doing now so long as my hide will in the end become not
d a wineskin (which is what happened to Marsyas),[7] but a piece of virtue. And yet Dionysodorus here thinks I am cross with him. It's not that I'm cross—I'm simply contradicting the things he said which I find objectionable. So, my fine Dionysodorus, don't call contradiction abuse—abuse is something quite different.

5. That is, try it on the dog or on a guinea pig.

6. Medea persuaded the daughters of Pelias to cut up their father and boil him in a cauldron, telling them that in this way they would renew his youth.

7. Marsyas, a satyr, challenged Apollo to a musical contest. Apollo, having won the contest, flayed his opponent alive. Cf. Herodotus, vii.26.

And Dionysodorus answered, Are you making your speech on the assumption that there exists such a thing as contradiction, Ctesippus?

I certainly am, he said, decidedly so. And do you think there is none, e
Dionysodorus?

Well you, at any rate, could not prove that you have ever heard one person contradicting another.

Do you really mean that? he answered. Well then, just listen to Ctesippus contradicting Dionysodorus, if you want to hear my proof.[8]

And do you undertake to back that up?

I certainly do, he said.

Well then, he went on, are there words to describe each thing that exists?

Certainly.

And do they describe it as it is or as it is not?

As it is.

Now if you remember, Ctesippus, he said, we showed a moment ago 286
that no one speaks of things as they are not, since it appeared that no one speaks what does not exist.

Well, what about it? said Ctesippus. Are you and I contradicting each other any the less?

Now would we be contradicting, he said, if we were both to speak the[9] description of the same thing? I suppose we would be saying the same things in that case.

He agreed.

But when neither of us speaks the description of the thing, would we b
be contradicting then? Or wouldn't it be the case that neither of us had the thing in mind at all?

He agreed to this too.

But when I speak the description of the thing whereas you speak another description of another thing, do we contradict then? Or is it the case that I speak it but that you speak nothing at all? And how would a person who does not speak contradict one who does?

Ctesippus fell silent at this, but I was astonished at the argument and said, How do you mean, Dionysodorus? The fact is that I have heard this c
particular argument from many persons and at many times, and it never ceases to amaze me. The followers of Protagoras made considerable use of it, and so did some still earlier. It always seems to me to have a wonderful way of upsetting not just other arguments, but itself as well. But I think I shall learn the truth about it better from you than from anyone else. The argument amounts to claiming that there is no such thing as false speaking, doesn't it? And the person speaking must either speak the truth or else not speak?

He agreed.

8. Reading *akouōmen nun ei* at e5.

9. Accepting the addition of ⟨*ton*⟩ before *tou* at a5.

d Now would you say it was impossible to speak what is false, but possible to think it?

No, thinking it is not possible either, he said.

Then there is absolutely no such thing as false opinion, I said.

There is not, he said.

Then is there no ignorance, nor are there any ignorant men? Or isn't this just what ignorance would be, if there should be any—to speak falsely about things?

It certainly would, he said.

And yet there is no such thing, I said.

He said there was not.

Are you making this statement just for the sake of argument, Dionysodorus—to say something startling—or do you honestly believe that there is no such thing as an ignorant man?

e Your business is to refute me, he said.

Well, but is there such a thing as refutation if one accepts your thesis that nobody speaks falsely?

No, there is not, said Euthydemus.

Then it can't be that Dionysodorus ordered me to refute him just now, can it? I said.

How would anyone order a thing which doesn't exist? Are you in the habit of giving such orders?

The reason I've raised the point, Euthydemus, is that I'm rather thickwitted and don't understand these fine clever things. And perhaps I'm about to ask a rather stupid question, but bear with me. Look at it this way: if
287 it is impossible to speak falsely, or to think falsely, or to be ignorant, then there is no possibility of making a mistake when a man does anything? I mean that it is impossible for a man to be mistaken in his actions—or isn't this what you are saying?

Certainly it is, he said.

This is just where my stupid question comes in, I said. If no one of us makes mistakes either in action or in speech or in thought—if this really is the case—what in heaven's name do you two come here to teach? Or
b didn't you say just now that if anyone wanted to learn virtue, you would impart it best?

Really, Socrates, said Dionysodorus, interrupting, are you such an old Cronus[10] as to bring up now what we said in the beginning? I suppose if I said something last year, you will bring that up now and still be helpless in dealing with the present argument.

Well you see, I said, these arguments are very difficult (as is natural, since they come from wise men) and this last one you mention turns out to be particularly difficult to deal with. Whatever in the world do you mean by the expression "be helpless in dealing with," Dionysodorus?
c Doesn't it clearly mean that I am unable to refute the argument? Just tell

[10] As the father of Zeus whom Zeus dethroned, Cronus is a symbol of the out-of-date.

me, what else is the sense of this phrase "I am helpless in dealing with the argument"?

But at least it is not very difficult to deal with *your* phrase,[11] he said, so go ahead and answer.

Before you answer me, Dionysodorus? I said.

You refuse to answer then? he said.

Well, is it fair?

Perfectly fair, he said.

On what principle? I said. Or isn't it clearly on this one, that you have come here on the present occasion as a man who is completely skilled in arguments, and you know when an answer should be given and when it should not? So now you decline to give any answer whatsoever because you realize you ought not to? d

You are babbling instead of being concerned about answering, he said. But, my good fellow, follow my instructions and answer, since you admit that I am wise.

I must obey then, I said, and it seems I am forced to do so, since you are in command, so ask away.

Now are the things that have sense those that have soul, or do things without soul have sense too?

It is the ones with soul that have sense.

And do you know any phrase that has soul? he asked.

Heavens no, not I.

Then why did you ask me just now what was the sense of my phrase? e

I suppose, I said, for no other reason than that I made a mistake on account of being so stupid. Or perhaps I did not make a mistake but was right when I spoke as if phrases had sense? Are you saying that I made a mistake or not? Because if I did not make one you will not refute me no matter how wise you are, and you will be "helpless in dealing with the argument." And if I did make one, you said the wrong thing when you claimed it was impossible to make mistakes—and I'm not talking 288 about things you said last year. So, Dionysodorus and Euthydemus, I said, it looks as if this argument has made no progress and still has the old trouble of falling down itself in the process of knocking down others. And your art has not discovered how to prevent this from happening in spite of your wonderful display of precision in words.

And Ctesippus said, Your manner of speech is certainly remarkable, O b men of Thurii or Chios, or from wherever and however you like to be styled, because it matters nothing to you if you talk complete nonsense.

I was worried in case there might be hard words, and started to pacify Ctesippus once again, saying, Ctesippus, let me say to you the same things I was just saying to Clinias, that you fail to recognize how remarkable the strangers' wisdom is. It's just that the two of them are unwilling to give us a serious demonstration, but are putting on conjuring tricks in imitation

11. Removing the brackets in c3 and accepting the emendation of *g'ou* for *tōi*.

c of that Egyptian sophist, Proteus.[12] So let us imitate Menelaus and refuse to release the pair until they have shown us their serious side. I really think some splendid thing in them will appear whenever they begin to be in earnest, so let us beg and exhort and pray them to make it known. As for me, I think I ought once again to take the lead and give an indication
d of what sort of persons I pray they will show themselves to be. Beginning where I left off earlier, I shall do my best to go through what comes next so as to spur them to action and in hopes that out of pity and commiseration for my earnest exertions they may be earnest themselves.

So, Clinias, I said, remind me where we left off. As far as I can remember it was just about at the point where we finally agreed that it was necessary to love wisdom, wasn't it?

Yes, he said.

Now the love of wisdom, or philosophy, is the acquisition of knowledge, isn't that so? I said.

Yes, he said.

e Well, what sort of knowledge would we acquire if we went about it in the right way? Isn't the answer simply this, that it would be one which will benefit us?

Certainly, he said.

And would it benefit us in any way if we knew how to go about and discover where in the earth the greatest quantities of gold are buried?

Perhaps, he said.

But earlier,[13] I said, we gave a thorough demonstration of the point that even if all the gold in the world should be ours with no trouble and without digging for it, we should be no better off—no, not even if we knew how
289 to make stones into gold would the knowledge be worth anything. For unless we also knew how to use the gold, there appeared to be no value in it. Or don't you remember? I said.

Yes, I remember very well, he said.

Nor does there seem to be any value in any other sort of knowledge which knows how to make things, whether money making or medicine or any other such thing, unless it knows how to use what it makes—isn't this the case?

He agreed.

b And again, if there exists the knowledge of how to make men immortal, but without the knowledge of how to use this immortality, there seems to be no value in it, if we are to conclude anything from what has already been settled.

We agreed on all this.

12. In *Odyssey* iv.456 ff. Proteus, a sea deity, refuses to assume his proper shape until he has transformed himself into a lion, a dragon, a panther, an enormous pig, into water, and into a tree.

13. At 280d, although the point made was more general.

Then what we need, my fair friend, I said, is a kind of knowledge which combines making and knowing how to use the thing which it makes.

So it appears, he said.

Then it seems not at all needful for us to become lyre makers and skilled c
in some such knowledge as that. For there the art which makes is one thing and that which uses is another; they are quite distinct although they deal with the same thing. There is a great difference between lyre making and lyre playing, isn't there?

He agreed.

And it is equally obvious that we stand in no need of the art of flute making, since this is another of the same kind.

He said yes.

Seriously then, said I, if we were to learn the art of writing speeches, is this the art which we would have to get if we are going to be happy?

I don't think so, said Clinias in answer.

On what ground do you say this? I asked. d

Well, he said, I notice that certain speech writers have no idea of how to use the particular speeches they themselves have written, in the same way that the lyre makers have no idea of how to use their lyres. And in the former case too, there are other people who are capable of using what the speech writers have composed but are themselves unable to write. So it is clear that in regard to speeches too, there is one art of making and another of using.

You seem to me, I said, to have sufficient ground for stating that the art of speech writing is not the one a man would be happy if he acquired. And yet it was in this connection that I expected the very knowledge we have been seeking all this time would put in an appearance. Because, as e
far as I am concerned, whenever I have any contact with these same men who write speeches, they strike me as being persons of surpassing wisdom, Clinias; and this art of theirs seems to me something marvelous and lofty. Though after all there is nothing remarkable in this, since it is part of the enchanters' art and but slightly inferior to it. For the enchanters' art consists 290
in charming vipers and spiders and scorpions and other wild things, and in curing diseases, while the other art consists in charming and persuading the members of juries and assemblies and other sorts of crowds. Or do you have some other notion of it? I said.

No, he said, it seems to me to be just as you say.

Where should we turn next, then? I asked. To which one of the arts?

I find myself at a loss, he said.

But I think I have discovered it, said I.

Which one is it? said Clinias.

The art of generalship seems to me, I said, to be the one which, more b
than any other, a man would be happy if he acquired.

It doesn't seem so to me, he said.

How is that? said I.

Well, this art is a kind of man hunting.

What then? I said.

No art of actual hunting, he said, extends any further than pursuing and capturing: whenever the hunters catch what they are pursuing they are incapable of using it, but they and the fishermen hand over their prey
c to the cooks. And again, geometers and astronomers and calculators (who are hunters too, in a way, for none of these make their diagrams; they simply discover those which already exist), since they themselves have no idea of how to use their prey but only how to hunt it, hand over the task of using their discoveries to the dialecticians—at least, those of them do so who are not completely senseless.

Well done, I said, most handsome and clever Clinias! And is this really the case?

d Very much so. And the same is true of the generals, he said. Whenever they capture some city, or a camp, they hand it over to the statesmen—for they themselves have no idea of how to use the things they have captured—just in the same way, I imagine, that quail hunters hand theirs over to quail keepers. So, he said, if we are in need of that art which will itself know how to use what it acquires through making or capturing, and if it is an art of this sort which will make us happy, then, he said, we must look for some other art besides that of generalship.

e CRITO: What do you mean, Socrates? Did that boy utter all this?

SOCRATES: You're not convinced of it, Crito?

CRITO: Good heavens no! Because, in my opinion, if he spoke like that, he needs no education, either from Euthydemus or anyone else.

SOCRATES: Dear me, then perhaps after all it was Ctesippus who said this, and I am getting absent-minded.

291 CRITO: Not my idea of Ctesippus!

SOCRATES: But I'm sure of one thing at least, that it was neither Euthydemus nor Dionysodorus who said it. Do you suppose, my good Crito, that some superior being was there and uttered these things—because I am positive I heard them.

CRITO: Yes, by heaven, Socrates, I certainly think it was some superior being, very much so. But after this did you still go on looking for the art? And did you find the one you were looking for or not?

b SOCRATES: Find it, my dear man—I should think not! We were really quite ridiculous—just like children running after crested larks; we kept thinking we were about to catch each one of the knowledges, but they always got away. So why should I recount the whole story? When we got to the kingly art and were giving it a thorough inspection to see whether it might be the one which both provided and created happiness, just there we got into a sort of labyrinth: when we thought we had come to the end,
c we turned round again and reappeared practically at the beginning of our search in just as much trouble as when we started out.

CRITO: And how did this come about, Socrates?

SOCRATES: I shall tell you. We had the idea that the statesman's art and the kingly art were the same.

CRITO: And then what?

SOCRATES: It was due to this art that generalship and the others handed over the management of the products of which they themselves were the craftsmen, as if this art alone knew how to use them. It seemed clear to us that this was the art we were looking for, and that it was the cause of right action in the state, and, to use the language of Aeschylus, that this d
art alone sits at the helm of the state, governing all things, ruling all things, and making all things useful.[14]

CRITO: And wasn't your idea a good one, Socrates?[15]

SOCRATES: You will form an opinion, Crito, if you like to hear what happened to us next. We took up the question once again in somewhat this fashion: Well, does the kingly art, which rules everything, produce some result for us, or not? Certainly it does, we said to each other. Wouldn't e
you say so too, Crito?

CRITO: Yes, I would.

SOCRATES: Then what would you say its result was? For instance, if I should ask you what result does medicine produce, when it rules over all the things in its control, would you not say that this result was health?

CRITO: Yes, I would.

SOCRATES: And what about your own art of farming, when it rules over all the things in its control—what result[16] does it produce? Wouldn't you 292
say that it provides us with nourishment from the earth?

CRITO: Yes, I would.

SOCRATES: Now what about the kingly art; when it rules over all the things in its control—what does it produce? Perhaps you won't find the answer quite so easy in this case.

CRITO: No, I certainly don't, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Nor did we, Crito. But you are aware of this point at least, that if this is to be the art we are looking for, it must be something useful.

CRITO: Yes indeed.

SOCRATES: And it certainly must provide us with something good?

CRITO: Necessarily, Socrates.

SOCRATES: And Clinias and I of course agreed that nothing is good except b
some sort of knowledge.

CRITO: Yes, you said that.

SOCRATES: Then the other results which a person might attribute to the statesman's art—and these, of course, would be numerous, as for instance, making the citizens rich and free and not disturbed by faction—all these appeared to be neither good nor evil;[17] but this art had to make them wise

14. The reference is probably to *Seven Against Thebes*, 2.

15. Writing *Oukoun* with acute accent on the first syllable rather than circumflex on the second in d4.

16. Removing the brackets in a1.

17. Cf. 281d–e.

and to provide them with a share of knowledge if it was to be the one
c that benefited them and made them happy.

CRITO: True enough. So you agreed on this for the moment at any rate, according to your account.

SOCRATES: And does the kingly art make men wise and good?

CRITO: Why not, Socrates?

SOCRATES: But does it make all people good, and in every respect? And is it the art which conveys every sort of knowledge, shoe making and carpentry and all the rest?

CRITO: I don't think so, Socrates.

d SOCRATES: Then what knowledge does it convey? And what use are we to make of it? It must not be the producer of any of those results which are neither good nor bad, but it must convey a knowledge which is none other than itself. Now shall we try to say what in the world this is, and what use we are to make of it? Is it agreeable to you if we say it is that by which we shall make others good?

CRITO: Certainly.

SOCRATES: And in what respect will they be good and in what respect useful, as far as we are concerned? Or shall we go on to say that they will
e make others good and that these others will do the same to still others? But in what conceivable way they are good is in no way apparent to us, especially since we have discredited what are said to be the results of the statesman's art. It is altogether a case of the proverbial "Corinthus, son of Zeus";[18] and, as I was saying, we are in just as great difficulties as ever, or even worse, when it comes to finding out what that knowledge is which will make us happy.

CRITO: Mercy on us, Socrates, you seem to have got yourselves into a frightful tangle.

293 SOCRATES: As far as I was concerned, Crito, when I had fallen into this difficulty, I began to exclaim at the top of my lungs and to call upon the two strangers as though they were the Heavenly Twins to rescue both myself and the boy from the third wave[19] of the argument and to endeavor in every conceivable way to make plain what this knowledge can be which we ought to have if we are going to spend the remainder of our lives in the right way.

CRITO: And what about it? Was Euthydemus willing to reveal anything to you?

b SOCRATES: Of course! And he began his account, my friend, in this generous manner: Would you prefer, Socrates, to have me teach you this knowledge you have been in difficulties over all this time, or to demonstrate that you possess it?

O marvellous man, I said, is this in your power?

18. The expression was proverbial for any sort of vain repetition.

19. For the first two, see 292a and 292d–e. The Heavenly Twins (Dioscuri) were regarded as protectors of seamen.

Very much so, he said.

Then for heaven's sake demonstrate that I possess it! I said. That will be much easier than learning for a man of my age.

Then come answer me this, he said: Is there anything you know?

Oh, yes, I said, many things, though trivial ones.

That will serve the purpose, he said. Now do you suppose it possible for any existing thing not to be what it is?

Heavens no, not I. c

And do you know something? he said.

Yes, I do.

Then you are knowing, if you really know?

Of course, as far as concerns that particular thing.

That doesn't matter, because mustn't you necessarily know everything, if you are knowing?

How in heaven's name can that be, said I, when there are many other things I don't know?

Then if there is anything you don't know, you are not knowing.

In just that matter, my friend, I said.

Are you any the less not knowing for all that? said he. And just now you said you were knowing, with the result that you are the man you are, and then again you are not, at the same time and in respect to the d same things.

Very good, Euthydemus—according to the proverb, "whatever you say is well said."[20] But how do I know that knowledge we were looking for? Since it is impossible both to be and not to be the same thing, if I know one thing I know absolutely everything—because I could not be both knowing and not knowing at the same time—and since I know everything, I also have this knowledge. Is this what you mean, and is this your piece of wisdom?

You are refuted out of your own mouth, Socrates, he said. e

But Euthydemus, I said, aren't you in the same condition? Because I would not be at all vexed at anything I might suffer in company with you and this dear man Dionysodorus. Tell me, don't you two know some existing things, and aren't there others you don't know?

Far from it, Socrates, said Dionysodorus.

What's that? I said. Do you know nothing at all?

On the contrary, he said.

Then you know everything, I said, since you know something? 294

Yes, everything, he said, and you also know everything if you really know even one thing.

O heavens, said I, how marvellous! And what a great blessing has come to light! But it can't be true that all the rest of mankind either know everything or nothing?

20. Reading *panta legeis* at d3.

Well, he said, I don't suppose they know some things and not others and are thus knowing and not knowing at the same time.

But what follows? I asked.

Everyone, he said, knows everything, if he really knows something.

b By the gods, Dionysodorus, I said—for I realize that you are both now in earnest, although I have provoked you to it with some difficulty—do you two really know everything? Carpentry and shoe making, for instance?

Yes indeed, he said.

So you are both able to do leather stitching?

Heavens yes, and we can do cobbling, he said.

And do you also have the sort of information which tells the number of the stars and of the sands?

Of course, he said. Do you think we would fail to agree to that too?

c Here Ctesippus interrupted: For goodness' sake, Dionysodorus, give me some evidence of these things which will convince me that you are both telling the truth.

What shall I show you? he asked.

Do you know how many teeth Euthydemus has, and does he know how many you have?

Aren't you satisfied, he said, with being told that we know everything?

Not at all, he answered, but tell us just this one thing in addition and prove that you speak the truth. Because if you say how many each of you has, and you turn out to be right when we have made a count, then we shall trust you in everything else.

d Well, they weren't willing to do it, since they thought they were being laughed at, but they claimed to know every single thing they were questioned about by Ctesippus. And there was practically nothing Ctesippus did not ask them about in the end, inquiring shamelessly whether they knew the most disgraceful things. The two of them faced his questions very manfully, claiming to know in each case, just like boars when they are driven up to the attack. The result was that even I myself, Crito, was

e finally compelled, out of sheer disbelief, to ask whether Dionysodorus even knew how to dance, to which he replied that he certainly did.

I don't suppose, I said, that at your age you are so far advanced in wisdom as to somersault over swords or be turned about on a wheel?

There is nothing I cannot do, he said.

And do you know everything just at the present moment, I asked, or is your knowledge also a permanent thing?

It is permanent as well, he said.

And when you were children and had just been born, did you know everything?

They both answered yes at the same moment.

295 Now the thing struck us as unbelievable; and Euthydemus asked, Are you incredulous, Socrates?

Well, I would be, I said, except for the probability that you are both wise men.

But if you are willing to answer my questions, he said, I will prove that you agree to these remarkable things too.

But, said I, there is nothing I would like better than to be refuted on these points. Because if I am unaware of my own wisdom, but you are going to demonstrate that I know everything and know it forever, what greater godsend than this would I be likely to come across my whole life long?

Then answer, he said.

Ask away, I am ready. b

Well then, Socrates, he said, when you have knowledge, do you have it of something, or not?

I have it of something.

And do you know by means of that by which you have knowledge, or by means of something else?

By means of that by which I have knowledge. I suppose you mean the soul, or isn't this what you have in mind?

Aren't you ashamed, Socrates, he said, to be asking a question of your own when you ought to be answering?

Very well, said I, but how am I to act? I will do just what you tell me. Now whenever I don't understand your question, do you want me to answer just the same, without inquiring further about it?

You surely grasp something of what I say, don't you? he said. c

Yes, I do, said I.

Then answer in terms of what you understand.

Well then, I said, if you ask a question with one thing in mind and I understand it with another and then answer in terms of the latter, will you be satisfied if I answer nothing to the purpose?

I shall be satisfied, he said, although I don't suppose *you* will.

Then I'm certainly not going to answer, said I, until I understand the question.

You are evading a question you understand all along, he said, because you keep talking nonsense and are practically senile.

I realized he was angry with me for making distinctions in his phrases, d because he wanted to surround me with words and so hunt me down. Then I remembered that Connus, too, is vexed with me whenever I don't give in to him, and that as a result, he takes fewer pains with me because he thinks I am stupid. And since I had made up my mind to attend this man's classes too, I thought I had better give in for fear he might think me too uncouth to be his pupil. So I said, Well, Euthydemus, if you think e this is how to do things, we must do them your way, because you are far more of an expert at discoursing than I, who have merely a layman's knowledge of the art. So go back and ask your questions from the beginning.

And you answer again from the beginning, he said. Do you know what you know by means of something, or not?

I know it by means of the soul, I said.

296 There he is again, he said, adding on something to the question! I didn't ask you by what you know, but whether you know by means of something.

Yes, I did give too much of an answer again, I said, because I am so uneducated. Please forgive me and I shall answer simply that I know what I know by means of something.

And do you always know by this same means, said he, or is it rather the case that you know sometimes by this means and sometimes by another?

Always, whenever I know, I said, it is by this means.

Won't you stop adding things on again? he said.

But I'm afraid that this word "always" may trip us up.

b It won't do it to us, he said, but to you, if anyone. Come along and answer: do you always know by this means?

Always, I said, since I have to withdraw the "whenever."

Then you always know, by this means. And since you are always knowing, the next question is, do you know some things by this means by which you know and others by some other means, or everything by this one?

Absolutely everything by this one, said I—those that I know, that is.

There it is again, he said—here comes the same qualification.

Well I take back the "those that I know," I said.

No, don't take back a single thing, he said—I'm not asking you any
c favors. Just answer me this: would you be capable of knowing "absolutely everything," if you did not know everything?

It would be remarkable if I did, said I.

And he said, Then add on everything you like now, because you admit that you know absolutely everything.

It seems I do, I said, especially since my "those that I know" has no effect, and I know everything.

And you have also admitted that you always know (by means of that by which you know), whenever you know, or however else you like to put it, because you have admitted that you always know and know all things at the same time. It is obvious that you knew even when you were
d a child and when you were being born and when you were being conceived. And before you yourself came into being and before the foundation of heaven and earth, you knew absolutely everything, if it is true that you always know. And, by heaven, he said, you always will know, and will know everything, if I want it that way.

I hope you will want it that way, most honorable Euthydemus, said I, if you are genuinely telling the truth. But I don't quite believe in your ability to bring it off unless your brother Dionysodorus here should lend a helping hand—perhaps the two of you might be able to do it. Tell me,
e I went on: with respect to other things I see no possibility of disputing with men of such prodigious wisdom by saying that I do not know everything, since you have stated that I do; but what about things of this sort, Euthydemus—how shall I say I know that good men are unjust? Come tell me, do I know this, or not?

Oh yes, you know it, he said.

Know what? said I.

That the good are not unjust.

Yes, I've always known that, I said. But this isn't my question—what 297
I'm asking is, where did I learn that the good *are* unjust?

Nowhere, said Dionysodorus.

Then this is something I do not know, I said.

You are ruining the argument, said Euthydemus to Dionysodorus, and this fellow here will turn out to be not knowing, and then he will be knowing and not knowing at the same time. And Dionysodorus blushed.

But you, I said, what do you say, Euthydemus? Your all-knowing brother b
doesn't appear to be making a mistake, does he?

Am I a brother of Euthydemus? said Dionysodorus, interrupting quickly.

And I said, Let that pass, my good friend, until Euthydemus instructs me as to how I know that good men are unjust, and don't begrudge me this piece of information.

You are running away, Socrates, said Dionysodorus, and refusing to answer.

And with good reason, said I, because I am weaker than either of you, so that I do not hesitate to run away from you both together. I am much c
more worthless than Heracles, who was unable to fight it out with both the Hydra, a kind of lady-sophist who was so clever that if anyone cut off one of her heads of argument, she put forth many more in its place, and with another sort of sophist, a crab arrived on shore from the sea—rather recently, I think. And when Heracles was in distress because this creature was chattering and biting on his left, he called for his nephew Iolaus to come and help him, which Iolaus successfully did. But if my d
Iolaus should come, he would do more harm than good.

And when you have finished this song and story, said Dionysodorus, will you tell me whether Iolaus is any more Heracles' nephew than yours?

Well, I suppose it will be best for me if I answer you, Dionysodorus, I said, because you will not stop asking questions—I am quite convinced of that—out of an envious desire to prevent Euthydemus from teaching me that piece of wisdom.

Then answer, he said.

Well, I said, my answer is that Iolaus was the nephew of Heracles, but e
as for being mine, I don't see that he is, in any way whatsoever. Because my brother, Patrocles, was not his father, although Heracles' brother, Iphicles, does have a name which is somewhat similar.

And Patrocles, he said, is your brother?

Yes indeed, said I—we have the same mother, though not the same father.

Then he both is and is not your brother.

Not by the same father, my good friend, I said, because his father was Chaeredemus and mine was Sophroniscus.

But Sophroniscus and Chaeredemus were both fathers? he asked.

Certainly, I said—the former was mine and the latter his. 298

Then was Chaeredemus other than a father? he said.

Other than mine at any rate, said I.

Then he was a father while he was other than a father? Or are you the same as a stone?

I'm afraid you will show that I am, I said, although I don't feel like one.

Then are you other than a stone? he said.

Yes, quite other.

Then isn't it the case that if you are other than a stone, you are not a stone, he said, and if you are other than gold, you are not gold?

That's true.

Then Chaeredemus is not a father if he is other than a father, he said.

So it seems that he is not a father, said I.

b Because if Chaeredemus *is* a father, said Euthydemus, interrupting, then, on the other hand, Sophroniscus, being other than a father, is not a father, so that you, Socrates, are without a father.

Here Ctesippus took up the argument, saying, Well, isn't your father in just the same situation? Isn't he other than my father?

Far from it, said Euthydemus.

What! Is he the same? he asked.

The same, certainly.

c I should not agree with that. But tell me, Euthydemus, is he just my father, or the father of everyone else as well?

Of everyone else as well, he replied. Or do you think the same man is both a father and not a father?

I was certainly of that opinion, said Ctesippus.

What, he said—do you think that a thing can be both gold and not gold? Or both a man and not a man?

But perhaps, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, you are not uniting flax with flax, as the proverb has it. Because you are making an alarming statement if you say your father is the father of all.

But he is, he replied.

Just of men, said Ctesippus, or of horses and all the other animals?

d All of them, he said.

And is your mother their mother?

Yes, she is.

And is your mother the mother of sea urchins?

Yes, and so is yours, he said.

So you are the brother of gudgeons and puppies and piglets.

Yes, and so are you, he said.

And your father turns out to be a boar and a dog.

And so does yours, he said.

You will admit all this in a moment, Ctesippus, if you answer my questions, said Dionysodorus. Tell me, have you got a dog?

Yes, and a brute of a one too, said Ctesippus.

e And has he got puppies?

Yes indeed, and they are just like him.

And so the dog is their father?

Yes, I saw him mounting the bitch myself, he said.

Well then: isn't the dog yours?

Certainly, he said.

Then since he is a father and is yours, the dog turns out to be your father, and you are the brother of puppies, aren't you?

And again Dionysodorus cut in quickly to keep Ctesippus from making some reply first and said, Just answer me one more small question: Do you beat this dog of yours?

And Ctesippus laughed and said, Heavens yes, since I can't beat you!

Then do you beat your own father? he asked.

There would certainly be much more reason for me to beat yours, he 299
said, for taking it into his head to beget such clever sons. But I suppose, Euthydemus, that the father of you and the puppies has benefited greatly from this wisdom of yours!

But he has no need of a lot of good things, Ctesippus—he does not, and neither do you.

Nor you either, Euthydemus? he asked.

Nor any other man. Tell me, Ctesippus, do you think it a good thing b
for a sick man to drink medicine whenever he needs it, or does it seem to you not a good thing? And do you think it good for a man to be armed when he goes to war rather than to go unarmed?

It seems good to me, he said. And yet I think you are about to play one of your charming tricks.

The best way to find out is to go ahead and answer, he said. Since you admit that it is a good thing for a man to drink medicine whenever he needs it, then oughtn't he to drink as much as possible? And won't it be fine if someone pounds up and mixes him a wagon load of hellebore?[21]

And Ctesippus said, Very true indeed, Euthydemus, if the man drinking c
is as big as the statue at Delphi!

It also follows, he said, that since it is a good thing to be armed in war, a man ought to have as many spears and shields as possible, if it really is a good thing?

It really does seem to be so, said Ctesippus. But surely you don't believe this yourself, Euthydemus? Wouldn't you prefer one shield and one spear?

Yes, I would.

And would you also arm Geryon and Briareus[22] in this fashion? he asked. I thought you and your companion here were cleverer than that, considering that you both fight in armor.

21. A plant with both poisonous and medicinal properties, a proverbial treatment for mental disorders.

22. Briareus was a hundred-handed monster who aided Zeus against the Titans. Geryon was a three-headed or three-bodied monster whose cattle were stolen by Heracles.

d Euthydemus was silent, but Dionysodorus went back to the answers Ctesippus had given earlier and asked, And what about gold, then? In your opinion is it a good thing to have?

Yes indeed, and, in this case, lots of it, said Ctesippus.

Well then, oughtn't one to have good things always and everywhere?

Very much so, he said.

And you admit that gold is also one of the good things?

Yes, I have admitted that already, he said.

Then one should have it always and everywhere, and especially in
e oneself? And wouldn't a man be happiest of all if he had three talents of gold in his stomach, and a talent in his skull, and a stater of gold in each eye?

Well, they do say, Euthydemus, said Ctesippus, that among the Scythians the happiest and best are the men who have a lot of gold in their own skulls (the same way that you were talking a moment ago about the dog being my father); and, what is still more remarkable, the story is that they also drink out of their own gilded skulls and gaze at the insides of them, having their own heads in their hands![23]

300 Tell me, said Euthydemus, do the Scythians and the rest of mankind see things capable of sight or incapable?[24]

Capable, I suppose.

And do you do so too? he asked.

Yes, so do I.

And do you see our cloaks?

Yes.

Then these same cloaks are capable of sight.

Remarkably so, said Ctesippus.

Well, what do they see? he said.

Nothing at all. And you, perhaps, don't suppose you see *them*,[25] you are such a sweet innocent. But you strike me, Euthydemus, as having fallen asleep with your eyes open; and if it is possible to speak and say nothing, you are doing exactly that.

b But surely it is not possible for there to be a speaking of the silent, said Dionysodorus.[26]

Entirely impossible, said Ctesippus.

Then neither is there a silence of the speaking?

Still less so, he answered.

23. The Scythians' habit of using the gilded skulls of their enemies as cups is described by Herodotus, iv.65.

24. The Greek phrase translated "capable of sight" here can be understood as either active (capable of seeing) or passive (capable of being seen). The argument to follow exploits this ambiguity.

25. Reading *horan auta* in that order at a6.

26. The "speaking of the silent" here, like the "silence of the speaking" just below, must be heard as ambiguous between "speaking done by the silent" and "speaking about silent things." The argument to follow exploits this ambiguity.

But whenever you mention stones and wood and pieces of iron, are you not speaking of the silent?

Not if I go by the blacksmiths' shops, he said, because there the pieces of iron are said to speak out and cry aloud if anyone handles them. So here, thanks to your wisdom, you were talking nonsense without being aware of it. But prove me the other point, how there can be a silence of the speaking.

(I had the notion that Ctesippus was very much keyed up on account c of his favorite being there.)

Whenever you are silent, said Euthydemus, are you not silent with respect to all things?

Yes, I am, he said.

Therefore, you are also silent with respect to the speaking, if "the speaking" is included in all things.

What, said Ctesippus, all things are not silent, are they?

I imagine not, said Euthydemus.

Well then, my good friend, do all things speak?

All the speaking ones, I suppose.

But, he said, this is not my question—I want to know, are all things silent, or do they speak?

Neither and both, said Dionysodorus, breaking in, and I'm convinced d you will be helpless in dealing with that answer.

Ctesippus gave one of his tremendous laughs and said, Euthydemus, your brother has made the argument sit on both sides of the fence and it is ruined and done for! Clinias was very pleased and laughed too, which made Ctesippus swell to ten times his normal size. It is my opinion that Ctesippus, who is a bit of a rogue, had picked up these very things by overhearing these very men, because there is no wisdom of a comparable sort among any other person of the present day.

And I said, Clinias, why are you laughing at such serious and beauti- e ful things?

Why Socrates, have you ever yet seen a beautiful thing? asked Dionysodorus.

Yes indeed, Dionysodorus, I said, and many of them.

And were they different from the beautiful, he asked, or were they the 301 same as the beautiful?

This put me in a terrible fix, which I thought I deserved for my grumbling. All the same I answered that they were different from the beautiful itself, but at the same time there was some beauty present with each of them.

Then if an ox is present with you, you are an ox? And because I am present with you now, you are Dionysodorus?

Heaven forbid, said I.

But in what way, he said, can the different be different just because the different is present with the different?

Are you in difficulties there? I said. (I was so eager to have the wisdom b of the pair that I was already trying to copy it.)

How can I not be in difficulties? he said. Not only I but everyone else must be, when a thing is impossible.

What are you saying, Dionysodorus? I said. Isn't the beautiful beautiful and the ugly ugly?

Yes, if I like, he said.

And do you like?

Certainly, he said.

Then isn't it also the case that the same is the same and the different
c different? Because I don't imagine that the different is the same, but I thought even a child would hardly doubt that the different is different. But you must have neglected this point deliberately, Dionysodorus, since in every other respect you and your brother strike me as bringing the art of argument to a fine pitch of excellence, like craftsmen who bring to completion whatever work constitutes their proper business.

You know then, he said, what the proper business of each craftsman is? For instance, you know whose business it is to work metal?

Yes, I do—the blacksmith's.

Well then, what about making pots?

The potter's.

And again, to slaughter and skin, and to boil and roast the pieces after cutting them up?

d The cook's, I said.

Now if a man does the proper business, he said, he will do rightly?

Very much so.

And the proper business in the case of the cook is, as you say, to cut up and skin?[27] You did agree to that didn't you?

Yes, I did, I said, but forgive me.

Then it is clear, he said, that if someone kills the cook and cuts him up, and then boils him and roasts him, he will be doing the proper business. And if anyone hammers the blacksmith himself, and puts the potter on
e the wheel, he will also be doing the proper business.

By Posidon, I exclaimed, you are putting the finishing touches on your wisdom! And do you think that such skill will ever be mine?

And would you recognize it, Socrates, he asked, if it did become yours?

If only you are willing, I said, I clearly would.

What's that, said he—do you think you know your own possessions?

Yes, unless you forbid it—for all my hopes must begin with you and end with Euthydemus here.

And do you consider those things to be yours over which you have
302 control and which you are allowed to treat as you please? For instance, an ox or a sheep: do you regard these as yours because you are free to

27. The Greek here is ambiguous between "it's proper for a cook to cut up and skin" and "it's proper to cut up and skin a cook." This English must be heard as having the same two readings.

sell them or give them away or sacrifice them to any god you please? And if you could not treat them in this fashion, then they would not be yours?

And because I knew that some fine thing would emerge from their questions, and, at the same time, because I wanted to hear it as quickly as possible, I said, This is exactly the case—it is only things like these which are mine.

Very well, he said. You give the name of living beings to all things that have a soul, don't you?

Yes, I said.

And you admit that only those living beings are yours over which you b
have power to do all these things I mentioned just now?

I admit it.

And he pretended to pause as though he were contemplating some weighty matter, and then said, Tell me, Socrates, do you have an ancestral Zeus?[28]

I had a suspicion (a correct one as it turned out) of the way in which the argument would end, and I began to make a desperate effort to escape, twisting about as though I were already caught in the net.

No, I have not, Dionysodorus, I said.

Then you are a miserable sort of fellow, and not even an Athenian, if c
you have no ancestral gods nor shrines, nor any of the other things of this sort which befit a gentleman.

Enough of that, Dionysodorus—mind your tongue and don't give me a lecture which is prematurely harsh. I certainly do have altars; and I have shrines, both domestic and ancestral, and everything else of the kind, just like the other Athenians.

Well, what about the other Athenians? he said. Doesn't each of them have an ancestral Zeus?

None of the Ionians use that expression, I said, neither those who are colonists from the city nor we ourselves. We do have an ancestral Apollo because of Ion's parentage,[29] but Zeus is not given the name of "ancestral" d
by us. Rather we call him "defender of the house" or "of the tribe," and we also have an Athena "of the tribe."

Oh, that will do, said Dionysodorus, since you do appear to have an Apollo and a Zeus and an Athena.

Certainly, said I.

Then these would be your gods? he said.

My ancestors, I said, and my masters.

28. The Greek word translated "ancestral" here and in the following was applied in different parts of the Greek world to the specific divinities worshipped there as "hereditary" protectors, the "fathers" of the people. But it also had a different application to Zeus in particular, as protector of the rights of ancestors. The argument to follow exploits this ambiguity.

29. Ion was the son of Apollo by Creusa. (Cf. Euripides, *Ion* 61–75.)

But at any rate they are yours, he said. Or didn't you admit that they were?

Yes, I admitted it, I said. What is going to happen to me?

e Then these gods, he said, are also living beings? Because you have admitted that everything which has a soul is a living being. Or don't these gods have a soul?

Oh yes, they do, I said.

Then they are living beings?

Yes, living beings, I said.

And you have agreed that those living beings are yours which you have a right to give away and to sell and to sacrifice to any god you please.

Yes, I agreed to that, I said—there is no retreat for me, Euthydemus.

303 Then come tell me straightway, he said: since you admit that Zeus and the other gods are yours, then do you have the right to sell them or give them away or treat them in any way you like, as you do with the other living creatures?

Then I, Crito, lay speechless, just as if the argument had struck me a blow. But Ctesippus ran to my aid, saying, Bravo, Heracles, what a fine argument! And Dionysodorus said, Is Heracles a bravo, or is a bravo Heracles? And Ctesippus said, By Posidon, what marvelous arguments! I give up—the pair are unbeatable.

b Whereupon, my dear Crito, there was no one there who did not praise to the skies the argument and the two men, laughing and applauding and exulting until they were nearly exhausted. In the case of each and every one of the previous arguments, it was only the admirers of Euthydemus who made such an enthusiastic uproar; but now it almost seemed as if the pillars of the Lyceum applauded the pair and took pleasure in their

c success. Even I myself was so affected by it as to declare that I had never in my life seen such wise men; and I was so absolutely captivated by their wisdom that I began to praise and extol them and said, O happy pair, what miraculous endowment you possess to have brought such a thing to perfection in so short a time! Among the many other fine things which belong to your arguments, Euthydemus and Dionysodorus, there is one which is the most magnificent of all, that you care nothing for the many,

d or in fact, for men of consequence or reputation, but only for persons of your own sort. And I am convinced that there are very few men like you who would appreciate these arguments, but that the majority understand them so little that I feel sure they would be more ashamed to refute others with arguments of this sort than to be refuted by them. And then there is this other public-spirited and kindly aspect of your performance; whenever you deny that there is anything beautiful or good or white, and that the

e different is in any way different, you do in fact completely stitch up men's mouths, as you say. But since you would appear to stitch up your own as well, you are behaving in a charming fashion and the harshness of your words is quite removed. But the greatest thing of all is that your skill is such, and is so skillfully contrived, that anyone can master it in a very

short time. I myself found this out by watching Ctesippus and seeing how quickly he was able to imitate you on the spur of the moment. This ability 304
of your technique to be picked up rapidly is a fine thing,[30] but not something which lends itself well to public performance. If you will take my advice, be careful not to talk in front of a large group; the listeners are likely to master it right away and give you no credit. Better just talk to each other in private, or, if you must have an audience, then let no one come unless he gives you money. And if you are sensible you will give your disciples b
the same advice, never to argue with anyone but yourselves and each other. For it is the rare thing, Euthydemus, which is the precious one, and water is cheapest, even though, as Pindar said, it is the best.[31] But come, said I, and see to admitting Clinias and me to your classes.

After saying these things, Crito, and making a few other brief remarks, we separated. Now figure out a way to join us in attending their classes, c
since they claim to be able to instruct anyone who is willing to pay, and say that neither age nor lack of ability prevents anyone whatsoever from learning their wisdom easily. And, what is specially relevant for you to hear, they say that their art is in no way a hindrance to the making of money.

CRITO: Well, Socrates, I am indeed a person who loves listening and who would be glad to learn something; but all the same I am afraid that I also am not one of Euthydemus' sort. Instead I am one of those you d
mentioned who would rather be refuted by arguments of this kind than use them to refute. Now it seems ridiculous to me to give you advice, but I want to tell you what I heard. When I was taking a walk one of the men who was leaving your discussion came up to me (someone who has a high opinion of himself for wisdom and is one of those clever people who write speeches for the law courts) and he said, Crito, aren't you a disciple of these wise men? Heavens no, I said—there was such a crowd that I was unable to hear, even though I stood quite close. And yet, he said, it was worth hearing. What was it? I asked. You would have heard men e
conversing who are the wisest of the present day in this kind of argument. And I said, what did they show you? Nothing else, said he, than the sort of thing one can hear from such people at any time—chattering and making a worthless fuss about matters of no consequence. (These are his approximate words.) But surely, I said, philosophy is a charming thing. Charming, my innocent friend? he said—why it is of no value whatsoever! And if 305
you had been present, I think you would have been embarrassed on your friend's account, he acted so strangely in his willingness to put himself at the disposal of men who care nothing about what they say, but just snatch at every word. And these men, as I was just saying, are among the most influential people of the present day. But the fact is, Crito, he said, that both the activity itself and the men who engage in it are worthless and

30. Omitting *to sophon* at a1.

31. *Olympian* 1.1.

b ridiculous. Now as far as I am concerned, Socrates, the man is wrong to criticize the activity and so is anyone else who does so. But to be willing to argue with such people in front of a large crowd does seem to me worthy of reproach.

SOCRATES: Crito, men like these are very strange. Still, I don't yet know what to say in return. What sort of man was this who came up and attacked philosophy? Was he one of those clever persons who contend in the law courts, an orator? Or was he one of those who equip such men for battle, a writer of the speeches which the orators use?

c CRITO: He was certainly not an orator, no indeed. Nor do I think he has ever appeared in court. But they say he understands the business—very much so—and that he is a clever man and can compose clever speeches.

SOCRATES: Now I understand—it was about this sort of person that I was just going to speak myself. These are the persons, Crito, whom Prodicus describes as occupying the no-man's-land between the philosopher and the statesman. They think that they are the wisest of men, and that they not only are but also seem to be so in the eyes of a great many, so that d no one else keeps them from enjoying universal esteem except the followers of philosophy. Therefore, they think that if they place these persons in the position of appearing to be worth nothing, then victory in the contest for the reputation of wisdom will be indisputably and immediately theirs, and in the eyes of all. They think they really are the wisest, and whenever they are cut short in private conversation, they attribute this to Euthydemus and his crew. They regard themselves as very wise, and reasonably so, since they think they are not only pretty well up in philosophy but also e in politics. Yes, their conceit of wisdom is quite natural because they think they have as much of each as they need; and, keeping clear of both risk and conflict, they reap the fruits of wisdom.

CRITO: And so, Socrates, do you think there is anything in what they say? For surely it can't be denied that their argument has a certain plausibility.

306 SOCRATES: Plausibility is just what it does have, Crito, rather than truth. It is no easy matter to persuade them that a man or anything else which is between two things and partakes of both is worse than one and better than the other in the case where one of the things is good and the other evil; and that in the case where it partakes of two distinct goods, it is worse than either of them with respect to the end for which each of the two (of which it is composed) is useful. It is only in the case where the b thing in the middle partakes of two distinct evils that it is better than either of those of which it has a share. Now if philosophy is a good, and so is the activity of a statesman (and each has a different end), and those partaking of both are in between, then these men are talking nonsense, since they are inferior to both. If one is good and the other bad, then they are better than the practitioners of the latter and worse than those of the former; while if both are bad, there is some truth in what they say, but c otherwise none at all. I don't suppose they would agree that both [philosophy and politics] are bad, nor that one is bad and the other good. The fact

of the matter is that, while partaking of both, they are inferior to both with respect to the object for which either politics or philosophy is of value; and that whereas they are actually in the third place, they want to be regarded as being in the first. However, we ought to forgive them their ambition and not feel angry, although we still ought to see these men for what they are. After all, we ought to admire every man who says anything sensible, and who labors bravely in its pursuit. d

CRITO: All the same, Socrates, as I keep telling you, I am in doubt about what I ought to do with my sons. The younger one is still quite small, but Critobulus is at an age when he needs someone who will do him good. Now whenever I am in your company your presence has the effect of leading me to think it madness to have taken such pains about my children in various other ways, such as marrying to make sure that they would be e of noble birth on the mother's side, and making money so that they would be as well off as possible, and then to give no thought to their education. But on the other hand, whenever I take a look at any of those persons who set up to educate men, I am amazed; and every last one of them strikes me as utterly grotesque, to speak frankly between ourselves. So 307 the result is that I cannot see how I am to persuade the boy to take up philosophy.

SOCRATES: My dear Crito, don't you realize that in every pursuit most of the practitioners are paltry and of no account whereas the serious men are few and beyond price? For instance, doesn't gymnastics strike you as a fine thing? And money making and rhetoric and the art of the general?

CRITO: Yes, of course they do.

SOCRATES: Well then, in each of these cases don't you notice that the b majority give a laughable performance of their respective tasks?

CRITO: Yes indeed—you are speaking the exact truth.

SOCRATES: And just because this is so, do you intend to run away from all these pursuits and entrust your son to none of them?

CRITO: No, this would not be reasonable, Socrates.

SOCRATES: Then don't do what you ought not to, Crito, but pay no attention to the practitioners of philosophy, whether good or bad. Rather give serious consideration to the thing itself: if it seems to you negligible, c then turn everyone from it, not just your sons. But if it seems to you to be what I think it is, then take heart, pursue it, practice it, both you and yours, as the proverb says.